



STORMWATER FACT SHEET

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PUBLIC MEETING

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6:00 p.m.

Ilwaco Community Building

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is the water discharge that runs off impervious surfaces, such as rooftops, paved streets, highways and parking lots. Stormwater discharge can also come from hard, grassy surfaces, including lawns, playfields and graveled roads.

Why is stormwater such a problem?

For many years, stormwater management has meant controlling water quantity and the inundating effects of large storm events. However, more recently, the cumulative effects of smaller storms have been recognized as a major contributor to water quality degradation.

Stormwater runoff carries pollutants from residential, commercial and industrial developments. Pollutants in stormwater runoff include metals, such as lead, cadmium and copper, oil and grease, pesticides, fertilizers and harmful bacteria.

Impervious surfaces directly relate to an increase in runoff volumes and peak rate flows. Increased volumes of stormwater runoff result in negative impacts to downstream properties, downstream water bodies such as local streams and the Columbia River, and reduced infiltration of groundwater. Due to regulations required under the Clean Water Act, it has become increasingly more important for municipalities to implement stormwater control measures.

What is the city's responsibility for stormwater?

The city is responsible for managing all aspects of stormwater within its jurisdiction. The city operates and maintains drainage facilities that are located within the public right-of-way or public easements.

How does the city currently pay for its stormwater services?

Currently, money from the city's Streets Fund is used as the primary source of funding for stormwater services. Revenue for the Streets Fund is generated through motor vehicle fuel taxes and property taxes collected by the city. As such, stormwater system maintenance, repairs and improvements compete for funds with roads. As these funds are limited and needed for maintaining city roadways, a dedicated source of revenue is necessary. The high demand on the Streets Fund does not allow the city to set aside enough funds to adequately address all the city's stormwater needs. Unfortunately, the backlog of stormwater projects continues to grow significantly as the system ages and is tested by continuing development and weather patterns. In addition, indebtedness from previous stormwater projects is currently being repaid through the Streets Fund.

Why do we need to spend more for stormwater?

Historically, the allocation of funds has not been sufficient to address all of the city's stormwater service needs. The city has attempted to provide stormwater services on a limited budget for many years, but the condition of the system continues to deteriorate. Local, state and federal laws also require that municipalities address the environmental impacts of stormwater pollution, but do not provide the funds to do it. Consequently, the city must identify alternative means for raising revenue.

What is a stormwater utility fund?

A stormwater utility fund is a separate fund responsible for providing service to Ilwaco's existing and expanding stormwater drainage system. This enterprise fund would allow fees to be collected and used to address flooding problems, as well as improve water quality by reducing stormwater pollution. Many cities throughout Pacific County, Washington State and nationwide have established stormwater utility funds.

How would a stormwater utility fund work?

A stormwater utility fund would be a separate fund within the city that would provide for stormwater management. Like water and wastewater, the stormwater fund would generate its revenue through user fees. These fees would become a dedicated revenue stream that is restricted for use only on stormwater system maintenance and operations of stormwater management devices, and for stormwater systems planning and construction.

By establishing a stormwater utility fund, the city will be able to take a more aggressive approach to stormwater management. The additional funds raised through the stormwater fee will allow the city to provide an increased level of system maintenance and repair, as well as enable the city to construct additional capital improvement projects.

How would stormwater utility fees be charged?

A stormwater utility fee would be charged based upon lot size. This is a more fair and equitable approach to determining the contribution of stormwater runoff to the city's stormwater management system than charges based on property value.

Who has to pay?

All developed and undeveloped property within the City of Ilwaco would pay the stormwater utility fee, regardless of whether or not they receive water and sewer services. This includes houses, schools, public facilities, churches and businesses.

How would the stormwater utility fees be collected?

While still being determined, the city anticipates the stormwater utility fees would either be billed monthly along with water/sewer utility bills, or billed separately semi-annually.

Why should I pay if there is not a stormwater inlet in front of my property?

All properties generate stormwater runoff that must be conveyed, transported, stored, treated and discharged by the city. Even though the stormwater inlet, pipes and ponds may be remote from your property, your parcel still contributes runoff, which ultimately discharges to the city stormwater management system and facilities. In addition, all parcels receive the benefit of the city's stormwater system.

My property retains water, why should I pay?

All property receives some benefit from the city's stormwater management system and facilities. In some cases, a property benefits by having unimpaired access to streets, which we all use as a means of getting to and from our property. Other properties may benefit because the city's stormwater management system and facilities collect runoff from streets and other private properties, which would otherwise drain onto it causing flooding and/or property damage.

Why don't we charge properties upstream (that discharge to the city)?

Pursuant to state legislation, the city can only charge for services within its corporate boundary unless an Interlocal agreement has been adopted.

Why should I pay for rain falling on my property?

With a stormwater rate, users are charged a fee for runoff discharged from their property to the city's stormwater management system and the benefit they receive from the city's system, not by the amount of rain falling on their property.

Why should I have to pay? I live on a hill and have no drainage problem.

You may not have a problem, but the runoff generated from your property is contributing to problems downstream. The approach being taken through this program recognizes that everyone contributes to the problem (runoff and pollution) and everyone will share in the results (improved water quality, reduced flooding, unimpaired access to roads, etc.)

When might I expect to see my first bill?

If the stormwater utility fund is implemented, the City of Ilwaco would expect to start billing parcels within city limits in early 2012.

What are the rates currently being considered?

- High-density residential (less than 6,000 SF lot): \$x per month (\$xx semi-annually).
- Low-density residential more than 6,000 SF lot): \$x per month (\$xx semi-annually).
- High-density commercial (less than 6,000 SF lot): \$x per month (\$xx semi-annually).
- Low-density commercial (more than 6,000 SF lot): \$x per month (\$xx semi-annually).
- High-density undeveloped (less than 6,000 SF lot): \$x per month (\$xx semi-annually).
- Low-density undeveloped (more than 6,000 SF lot): \$x per month (\$xx semi-annually).